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THE FAMILY

S N 121 59 563 I. Introduction

Northwest China is heavily populated by national minorities. In the province of Sinkiang, the Chinese even form a minority group and the Turkic Moslems constitute the majority. Therefore, in a discussion of the family in this area, general statements applying to the population as a whole would not apply, but a distinction has to be made between several different ethnic elements.

For the purposes of the present section, the following rough division suggests itself: (a) Turkic sedentary Moslems; (b) Turkic nomadic Moslems; (c) the Dungans or Chinese Moslems; (d) the Tibetans; (e) the Mongours; (f) the Mongols, and (g) the Chinese. The last two groups are discussed in detail in their respective handbooks, the IMAR Handbook and the General Handbook of China.

S N 709 59 183 581 Among all Moslems Islam forms the ideal concept of the family. In Islamic society the institution of the family has always been one of primary importance. The family is considered the basic essential of human civilization. Having a family, and being a dutiful member of one, is not only regarded as necessary, but is expressly a religious obligation. Marriage, the step leading to the establishment of a family, is a sacred contract into which each Moslem must enter. A Moslem who, without just reason, does not marry and does not establish a family, is considered almost as a heretic.

S N 59 182 [554] [589] The family's function is primarily for reproduction of the group and the continuation of the family. The institution of the family, furthermore, provides security and peace of mind for its members. The family man is respected and esteemed in Moslem society; he is considered honorable and trustworthy. An unmarried man is likely to be looked upon with some suspicion and distrust.

S N 59 709 183 Since the family plays such a significant role in Moslem society, there is great emphasis on its unity and closeness. This is probably best expressed in the following quotation from the Koran, "...and Allah has made wives for you from yourselves and has given you sons and daughters from your wives." This closeness resulting from the blood relationship is extended to all other phases of family life.

S N 593 S N [829] Love and compassion should underlie all the relationships within the family. In relations between a man and his wife, or wives, between one kin to another, love is stressed as the basis. A man's behavior within his family reflects his attitude toward society as a whole. If there is love in his heart for his family, he will also have compassion for others and be of service to society.

S N 592 593 In the family, the man's position is always superior to that of the woman, regardless of his age. The wife is, accordingly, put in an inferior position to that of her husband, being under his control completely. The head of the house holds unquestioned authority

/Chinese Moslems (Dungans)/

within the railings in the mosque and read the Koran, wear white or green turbans, the leader's turban being more elaborate, with a tassel hanging down the back. Common people wear pointed octagonal caps of white, red or black, the color distinguishing the sect to which they belong.

Some women dress differently from the Chinese women, and wear a sort of turban hat. Ordinarily their dresses are in dark colors, but they may wear gay colors for festivals. According to ancient custom they must veil their faces in the presence of men, but this custom was abandoned long ago.

In cities and towns where the Chinese Moslems dress exactly like the Han Chinese, the men can be distinguished by their physical build and features, but the women are not easily recognized.

d. Occupation

Most Chinese Moslems are business men and traders, and most of them also farm. As farmers they are not equal to the Han Chinese, but they excel in dealing with cattle and everywhere they monopolize the beef and sheep trade. They are also merchants, bakers, workers in jade, money changers, and inn and restaurant keepers.

Outside a Moslem-owned restaurant there hangs a sign displaying a water pot surmounted by a dress hat, and two Chinese characters, Hui-hui. The pot signifies ceremonial cleanliness and guarantees that no pork is used. The hat indicates respect to customers. There are also two Chinese characters on the tea pot, meaning "Pure and True."

Formerly their religion forebade the Moslems to become money-lenders, barbers, fortune-tellers, actors, or servants or apprentices to the Chinese. How strictly the people now observe this taboo is not known.

3. Social values

a. Group spirit

The we-feeling is very strong among the Dungans. The whole group will sacrifice time and money for an individual oppressed by outsiders, and fight for him until justice prevails. Endowed with a courageous nature, the Moslem man is willing to sacrifice his life for the welfare of the group.

This spirit is shown by overt expression in daily social relationships. The Chinese title Lao-piao (old cousin) is applied even to a stranger of the same religious faith. The word old signifies respect; cousin signifies blood relationship. Hence Lao-piao indicates a feeling of closeness toward all members of the faith. Another expression of this feeling is found in the saying that "every Moslem in the world belongs to the same family."

b. Concept of charity

Many of the values in Chinese Moslem society are based upon

/Chinese Moslems (Dungans)/

S N 563 183 779 431 (651) religious teachings. According to the religious code it is obligatory for a man of means to contribute a certain amount of his wealth to public charity. Next to worship, this is the most important duty in Moslem society. The original idea of helping the poor and needy evolved into a tax (ten per cent on agricultural produce and two and one-half per cent on animals) collected from all believers for religious and public welfare purposes. Another form of alms, the sadaqa, is a voluntary offering. Public welfare supported by the tax, after the collector's fee is deducted, includes freeing slaves, assistance to persons who become indebted for good reason, making holy war to defend the people and the faith, and aiding needy travelers.

S N 563 796 735 During the month of Ramadan (fasting) donations and offerings are collected for public welfare purposes. The amount is not fixed, and the act of giving is voluntary. A sense of public responsibility is strong among these people. Not only do they give regular allowances to the needy in their own communities, but they help needy outsiders of their own faith.

S N 563 788 554 The Hajjis, or those who have completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, are highly respected in the Moslem community, and wear special badges to mark their distinction. The opportunity to journey to Mecca is the dream of all Moslems.

c. Virtue

S N 563 779 779 It is important for the individual to cultivate the true concept of peace and submission. The concept of peace involves such ideals as mutual cooperation and aid among mankind, mutual understanding among religions and peaceful co-existence of nations to achieve world brotherhood. The concept of submission means to submit oneself wholly to Allah and follow his teachings, sacrificing self-interest for the promotion of happiness for mankind.

S N 563 515 Personal cleanliness, both internal and external, is most important. Cleanliness in eating habits and personal hygiene is thought to develop a clean soul, free of evil thoughts and immoral conduct.

S N 563 186 d. Racial superiority

The Chinese Moslems regard themselves as a special group, superior to their Chinese neighbors. As students and officials, their attitude toward respect for the emperor and for Confucius has, in the past, been one of compromise. Compelled by law to conform, they excused themselves on the grounds that they did so outwardly but not in their hearts. The old and the new sects of Chinese Moslems, although bitterly hostile toward each other and at times engaged in armed conflict, on the whole present a (798) united front toward the Chinese and the rest of the world.

181 spite of the strong feeling of identification with Islam, the loose-
ness of the family ties, the absence of any clan ties among the
sedentary population, and the tremendous amount of individual
economic independence, are indicative of this trend of individual-
ism in the Turkic sedentary society.

The traditional economic structure of the urban society, which is based on the small individual merchants, shopkeepers and artisans, is probably the main contributor to the individualistic nature which developed in this society.

Individualism in the Turkic society is not a conscious intellec-
tual movement (although it is reflected in much of the Turkic liter-
ature), but is a product of spontaneous historical evolution of the
181 society. The establishment of a strong Communist regime with
668 its exceedingly numerous social controls on the life of the individ-
199 ual is an unnatural imposition on this society. The stress on con-
formity to set a pattern of thought and behavior, the encroachment
on the individual liberties, and above all the destruction of the in-
dividual economic basis, will probably destroy much of the indi-
vidualistic traditions of the Turkic society.

181 The situation differs in some respects in the nomadic tribal
184 society, where the individual depends so strongly on the society
for his economic and cultural needs as well. Here the individual's
freedom of action and expression is curtailed to fit the pressing
needs of the society as a whole. The family and clan ties are
much stronger and more important.

181 G. The Concept of Freedom

183 While the Chinese, living in the same environment as the Turks,
192 even lack a proper term for 'freedom', the Turks feel so strongly
and emotional about 'freedom', that they have an abundant number
of different words for it, just as the Mongols have hundreds of
words for military and tactical matters.

Words for freedom are, besides istiklal (of Arabian origin and most used), hürrüyet (e.g. söz hürriyeti 'freedom of speech'), serbestlik (the Eastern Turks often refer to their struggle for freedom as to serbestlik harbi 'the war or campaign for independence'), muafiyet, azadelik, etc.

181 The concept of freedom goes back to the nomadic tribes of
183 Central Asia. The freedom enjoyed by the nomad is one of the most highly valued of his treasures. The sedentary Turks still look up to the nomads, whose way of life they have given up centuries ago. Their literary and cultural traditions have come down from their nomadic forefathers, and with them the concept of the unlimited freedom of the steppe people.

The traditional concept of freedom was not of Turkic origin alone; the Arabic influence on the Turkic civilization has left its
[192] marks here also. The word that designates freedom in Turkish

181 /Turks of Sinkiang/
721 and the Turkis are likely to make untrustworthy soldiers.
779

J. Material Concepts

556 One of the most important standards according to which an
183 individual's place in society was measured in Sinkiang was the
[565] extent of his wealth (Türk: zenginlik). The wealthy merchants and landowners for centuries occupied the leading positions in society, while those who lacked property, the poor and the beggars, were at the bottom of the social ladder. Wealth was considered as a sign of God's blessings (Türk: Allahin nimetleri) and of the individual's earthly wisdom. A man of property commanded political power as well as an important position in society, while a man who had been reduced to poverty lost all his prestige. Poverty was considered a disaster, as the following folk song
[735] indicates:
[539]

"My horse is gone from before me,
My whip is no more at my side.
Even though this be my native land
Poverty is come upon me."

(C.P. Skrine, Chinese Central Asia, p. 208)

556 From the Communist propaganda, it seems their intention is
668 to eliminate the wealthy classes. It is difficult to tell how many
177 of the leading property owners have become influential under the
[565] present regime as "Communist" leaders, and how many have been truly eliminated. If Communist doctrines are truly pursued, a new attitude in regard to property, will have to be developed. The association of property with the individual will cease, since the property will be transferred to the ownership of the state. We have indications that such a transformation has not fully occurred. The leadership of the Moslem community, however, has been transferred from its wealthy members to the party officials. An individual cannot aspire any more for advancement in terms of gathering more property, but only in terms of becoming an important party member.

815 As regards science (Türk : bilgi, verb. 'knowledge', the term
668 is as old as recorded Türkic history) there was not much of it p
177 prior to the Communist revolution. The only type of knowledge prevalent among the population was the knowledge of religion, of Islam, and the scholars of the Turkic community were its Islamic scholars, and not those versed in secular education. However, with the dependence of the new regime on the new regime of science and scientific achievements (sometimes the term science corresponds to what we mean by it, and often it is used to embrace much more), a new emphasis has been put on the sciences. There are very few among the Turkic people in Sinkiang who are familiar with any of the sciences, and therefore there still is no basic attitude or reaction to the world of science. It is regarded with mixed curiosity, admiration and fear. The term "science"